



**ACTION
COMICS**



A NOVEL-LENGTH
BICENTENNIAL BLOCKBUSTER--
"DIE NOW. LIVE LATER!"

30¢
NO. 463
SEPT.
30410



SUPERMAN'S ACTION COMICS



FROM **1976** TO **1776**--
SUPERMAN GETS HIT...
BUT IT'S **CLARK KENT** WHO LANDS IN THE PAST!





WITNESS, READERS--ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS SCENES IN THE ANNALS OF AMERICAN HISTORY--THE SIGNING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE! BUT WAIT! SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THIS HISTORIC DOCUMENT... OR DID HE?

YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT IF THE MAN OF STEEL WAS THERE WITH THE FOUNDING FATHERS IN SPIRIT... OR IN THE FLESH--OR BOTH--

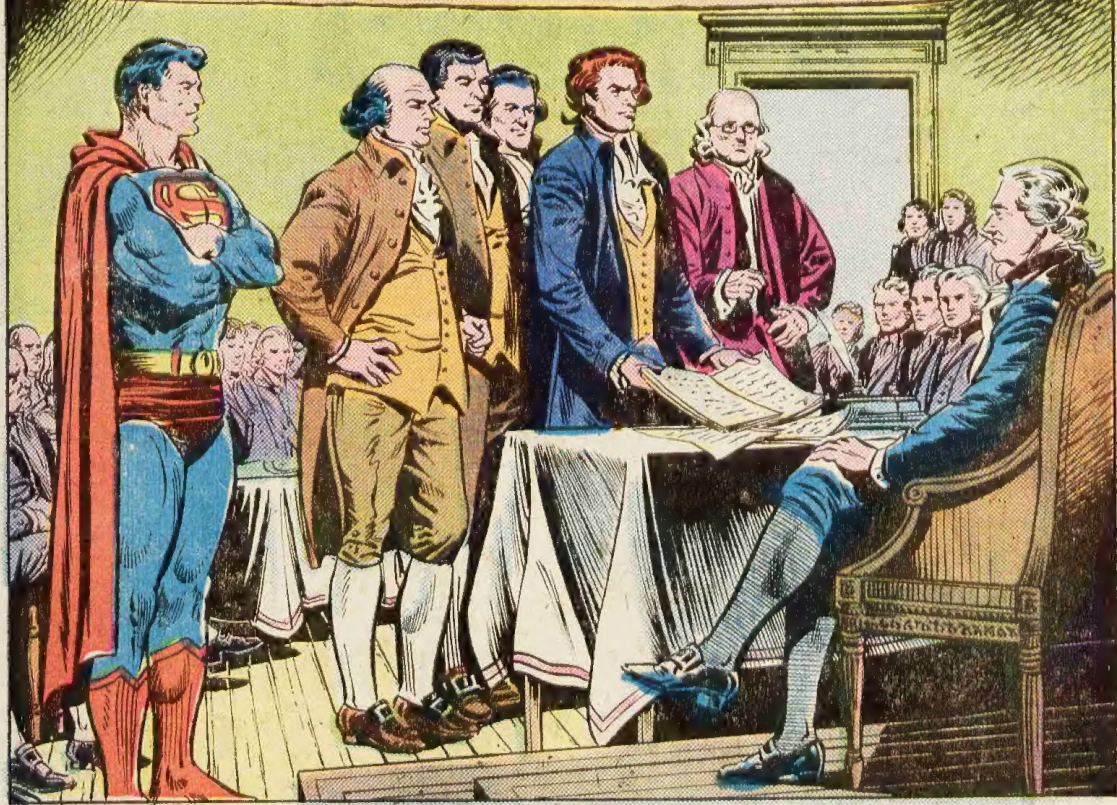
--AS HE CONCLUDES A BATTLE WITH A FOE SO FORMIDABLE, THE ONLY WAY IT CAN END IS TO--

**"DIE NOW,
LIVE LATER!"**

STORY BY:
CARY BATES

ART BY:
CURT SWAN & TEKBLAISDELL

EDITED BY:
JULIUS SCHWARTZ



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YOU'RE LOOKING AT A VERY WELL-KNOWN FACE --THE FACE OF REPORTER **CLARK KENT**, FAMILIAR TO MILLIONS OF METROPOLIS CITIZENS FOR HIS NIGHTLY NEWSCASTS ON **WSES-TV...**

RIGHT NOW HE'S GETTING HIS NEXT ASSIGNMENT FROM HIS BOSS--PART OF ANY REPORTER'S USUAL ROUTINE...

...BUT TODAY THE ROUTINE IS ANYTHING BUT USUAL... BECAUSE TODAY IS JULY 4TH, 1776--

--AND INSTEAD OF GBS PRESIDENT **MORGAN EDGE**, CLARK'S BOSS IS NONE OTHER THAN **BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**-- EDITOR OF THE **PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE!**

YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, SIR?

THAT I DID, CLARK!

AS YOU WELL KNOW, MY DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUES AND I ARE VOTING ON THE DECLARATION THIS AFTERNOON AT INDEPENDENCE HALL...

...AND I WANT YOU THERE TO CHRONICLE THE EVENT!

YOU CAN COUNT ON ME, MR. FRANKLIN!

NOW OFF WITH YOU...I HAVE MUCH TO DO BEFORE THE EVENT!

THEN I'LL BE SEEING YOU AT INDEPENDENCE HALL, SIR!

AND MOMENTS LATER, AS A MILD-MANNERED PHILADELPHIAN WALKS THE STREETS OF THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE...

'MORNING, CLARK...

MR. HANCOCK! *
HOW ARE YOU?

COULDN'T BE
BETTER, CLARK!

WELL, TODAY IS
THE MONUMENTAL
DAY!

*YES, READER, THIS IS JOHN
HANCOCK--WHOSE FAMOUS
SIGNATURE IS DESTINED TO READ
FIRST AND FOREMOST ON THE
DECLARATION!

MY WORD!
SOMETHING
FRIGHTENED THOSE
HORSES!

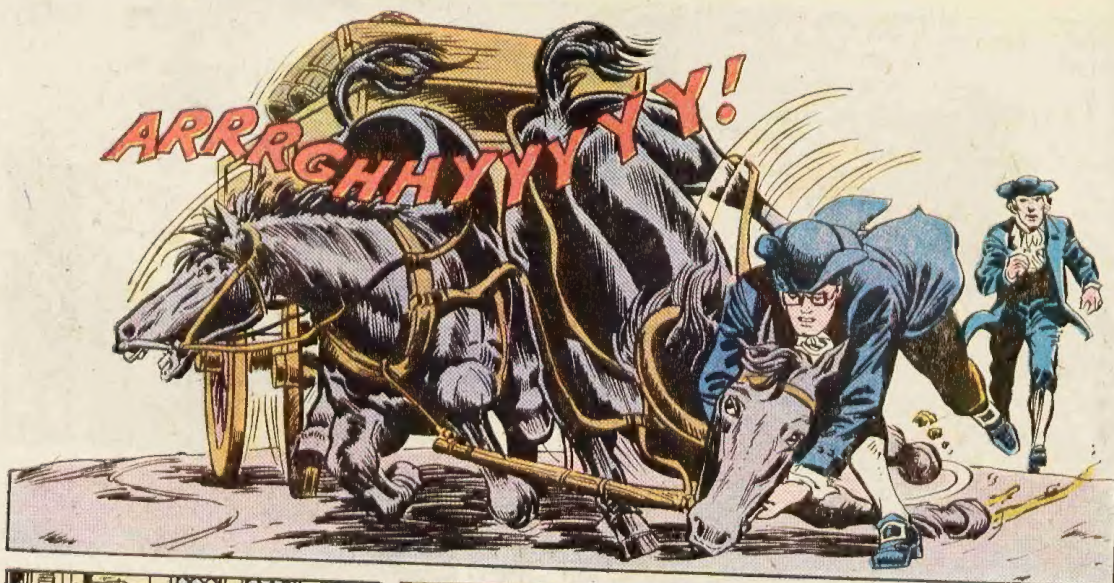
NYNYGGGGG!

GREAT SCOTT!
THOSE WOMEN AND
CHILDREN MAY BE
TRAMPLED!

COME ON, CLARK!
THIS IS A JOB
FOR US!

JEHOSHAPHAT!
NEVER HAVE I SEEN
A MAN MOVE THAT
FAST!

NYNYGHHHHH!



THAT MAN MUST HAVE THE **STRENGTH** OF TEN OXEN!

WHAT A DISPLAY OF RAW COURAGE!



CLARK! YOU TOPPLED THOSE HORSES AS IF THEY WERE NEWBORN COLTS!

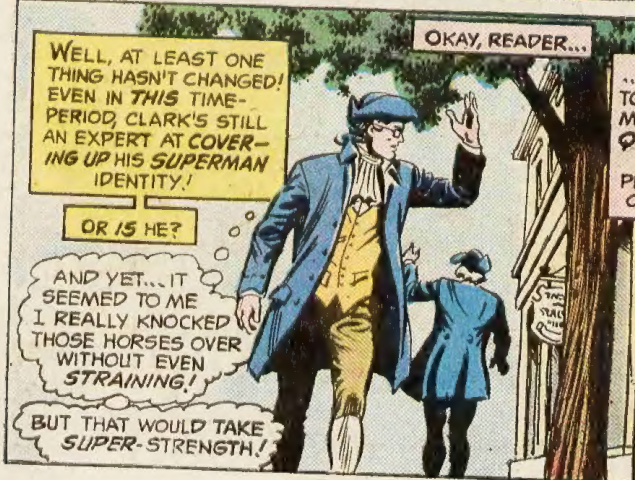
I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT MYSELF...

IF **GENERAL WASHINGTON** SAW THAT DEMONSTRATION, HE'D WANT A MAN LIKE YOU LEADING HIS TROOPS INTO BATTLE!



THOSE **PUDDLES**, CLARK! THE HORSES' HOOFS MUST HAVE **SLID** ACROSS THE MUD AS YOU GRABBED THEM!

YES, SIR... THAT MUST BE THE EXPLANATION!



WELL, AT LEAST ONE THING HASN'T CHANGED! EVEN IN **THIS** TIME-PERIOD, CLARK'S STILL AN EXPERT AT COVERING UP HIS **SUPERMAN** IDENTITY!

OR IS HE?

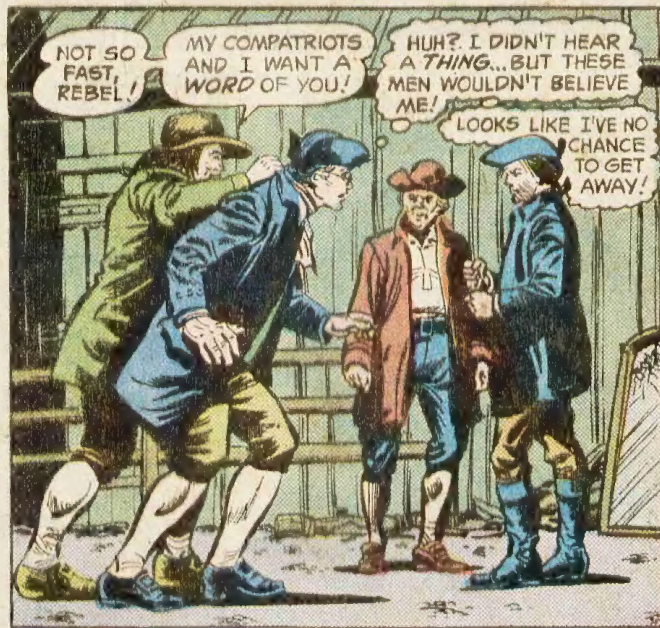
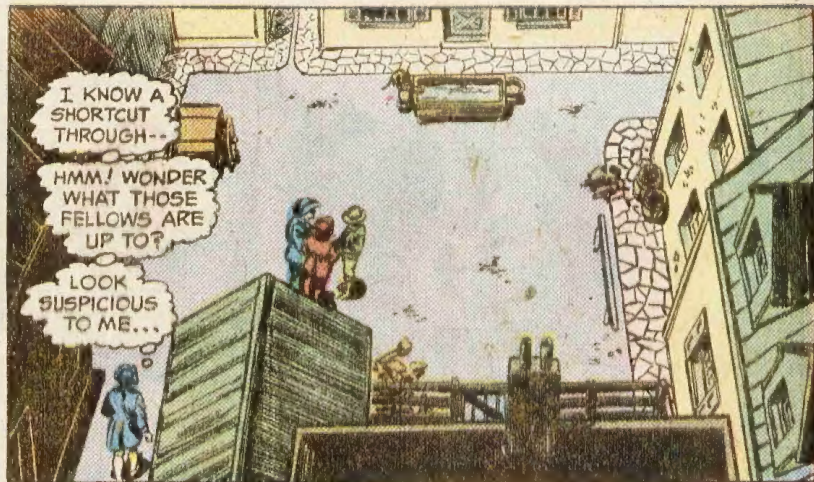
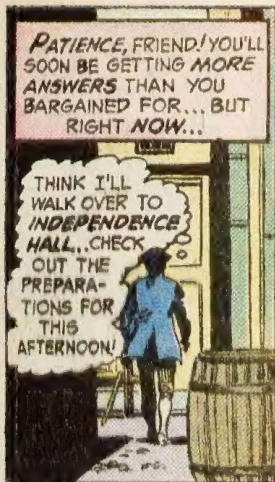
AND YET... IT SEEMED TO ME I REALLY KNOCKED THOSE HORSES OVER WITHOUT EVEN **STRAINING**!

BUT THAT WOULD TAKE **SUPER-STRENGTH**!

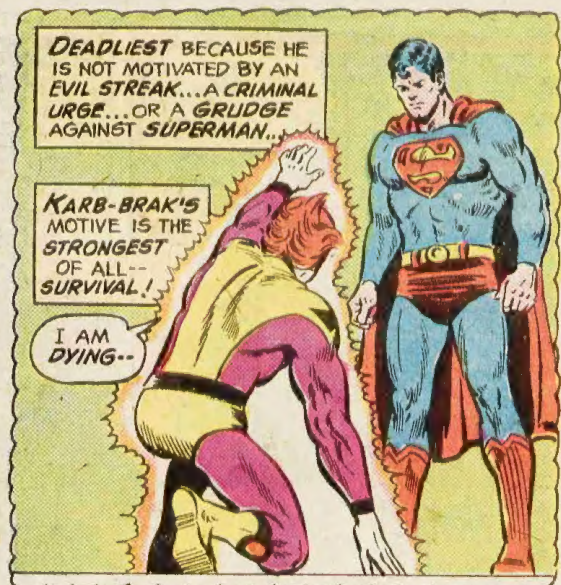
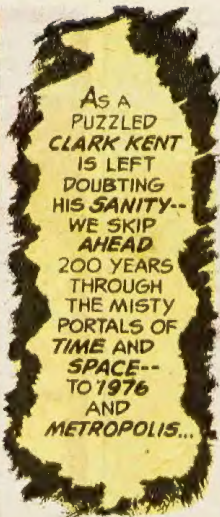
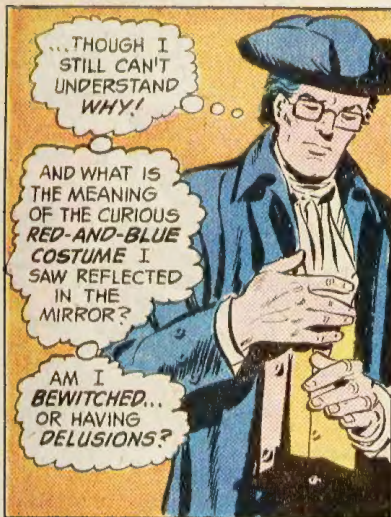
OKAY, READER...

...LET'S TRY TO PUT YOUR MOUNTING QUESTIONS IN THE PROPER ORDER--

- ① WHAT IS **SUPERMAN** DOING IN 1776, DURING THE **AMERICAN REVOLUTION**--A FULL 200 YEARS OUT OF HIS OWN TIME-PERIOD?
- ② WHY HAS HE ADAPTED HIS **CLARK KENT** IDENTITY TO COLONIAL LIFE--TO WORK AS A **REPORTER** FOR **BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**?
- ③ AND MOST BAFFLING OF ALL--HOW COULD CLARK HAVE POSSIBLY FORGOTTEN HE'S REALLY **SUPERMAN**?









--POWERS
LIKE YOURS!

HIS STRENGTH IS
TREMENDOUS...
OVERWHELMING!

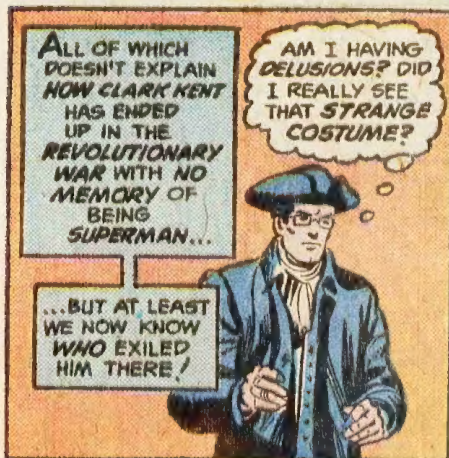


SURVIVAL-- THAT WAS ALL THAT MATTERED
TO KARB-BRAK--AND TIME WAS FAST
RUNNING OUT FOR HIM...

MY
CONDITION
IS ABOUT
TO ENTER
ITS
FINAL
PHASE!

I **MUST** FIND
A MEANS OF
REMOVING SUPERMAN
FROM EARTH! UP TILL
NOW, TIME HAS BEEN
AGAINST ME--

--NOW IT
SHALL BE
MY ALLY!



ALL OF WHICH
DOESN'T EXPLAIN
HOW CLARK KENT
HAS ENDED
UP IN THE
REVOLUTIONARY
WAR WITH NO
MEMORY OF
BEING
SUPERMAN...

AM I HAVING
DELUSIONS? DID
I REALLY SEE
THAT **STRANGE**
COSTUME?

...BUT AT LEAST
WE NOW KNOW
WHO EXILED
HIM THERE!



NO TIME TO WONDER ABOUT
IT NOW--NOT IF I'M GOING TO
GET TO **INDEPENDENCE HALL**
AHEAD OF **BEN FRANKLIN**
AND THE OTHER DELEGATES!



SOON...

THERE IT IS...
INDEPENDENCE HALL,
WHERE--

OH, MY
GOODNESS--



VERY KIND OF
YOU TO HELP ME,
SIR!

NO OFFENSE,
INTENDED, MISS!

B-BUT WHY DO
YOU **STARE** AT
ME SO?

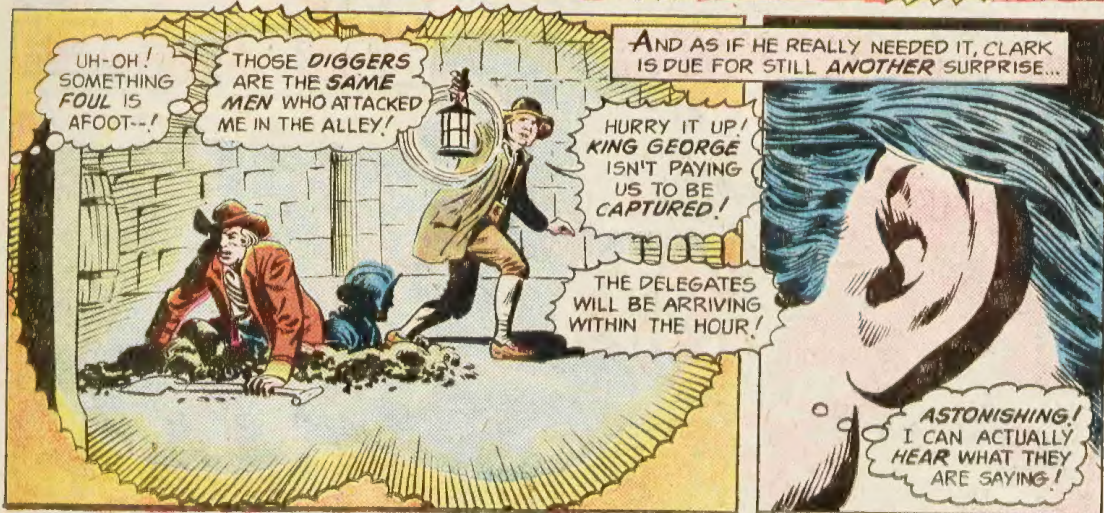
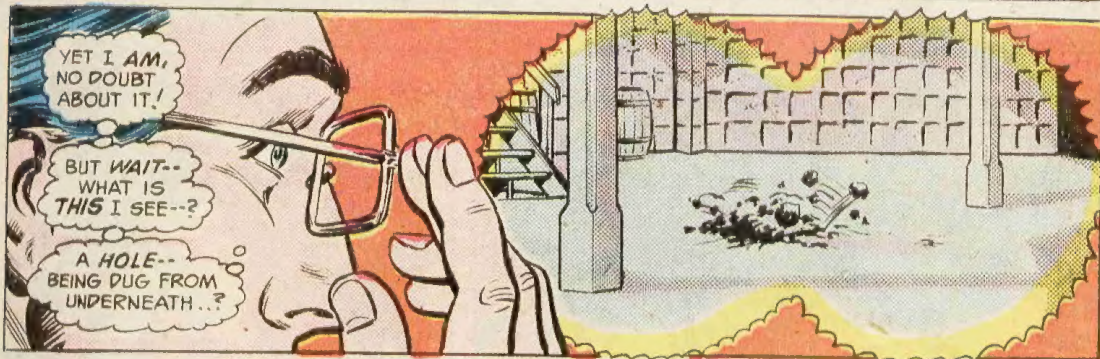
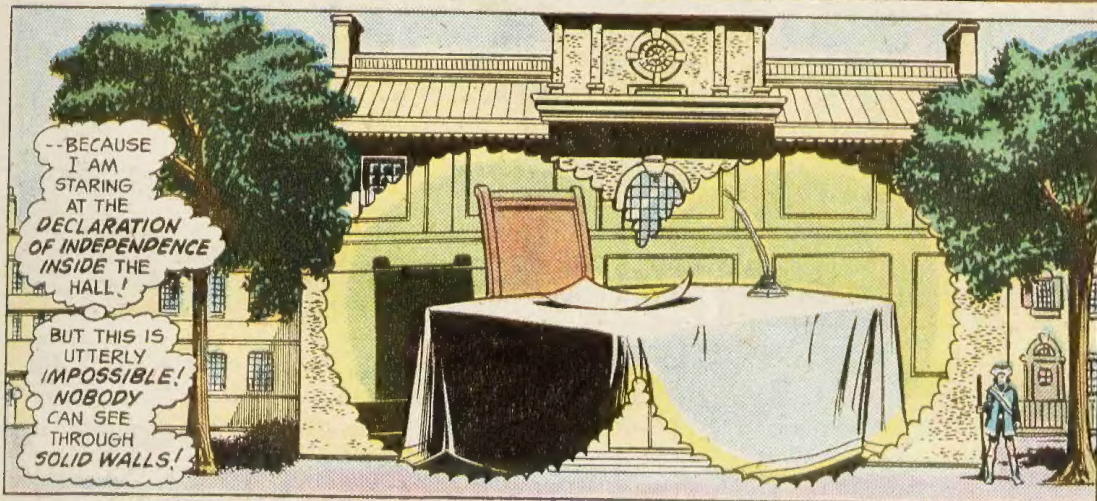
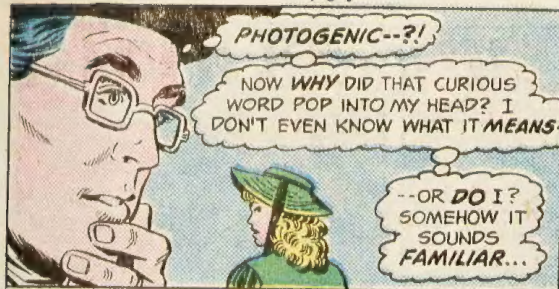
IT'S JUST THAT
YOU HAVE SUCH A
PHOTOGENIC
FACE!

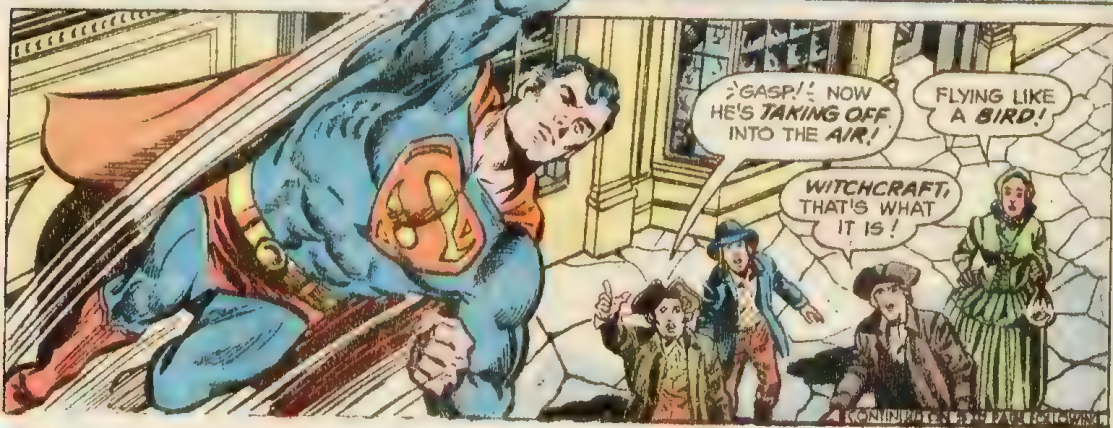
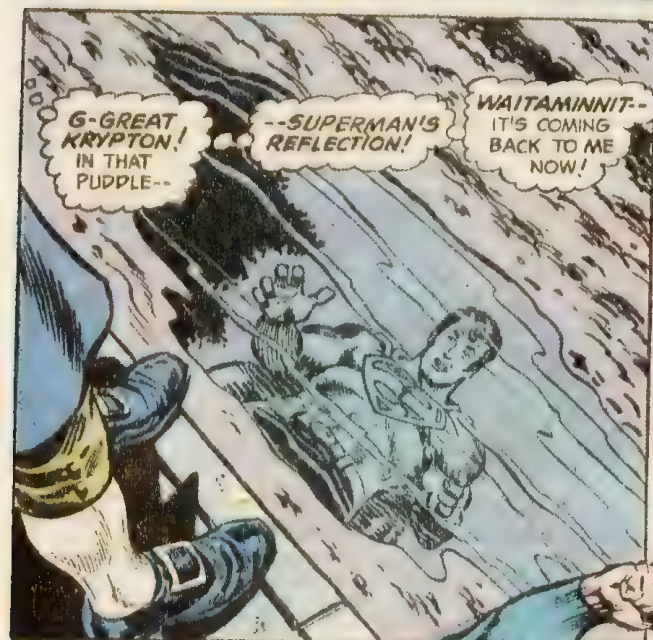
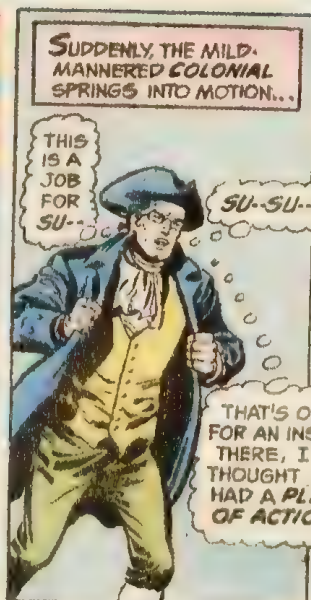


PHO-TO-GEN-IC!?

I TRULY HOPE YOUR
MANNER IS NOT AS
FOREIGN AS YOUR
LANGUAGE!

CONTINUED ON THE PAGE FOLLOWING





EVERYTHING IS CLEAR NOW--
KARB-BRAK
SENT ME BACK
IN TIME...

...AFTER HE
USED HIS
PSI-MACHINE
TO ERASE MY
MEMORY OF BEING
SUPERMAN!

THEN HE PROGRAMMED
ME... AND EVERYONE ELSE
HERE... TO BELIEVE I WAS A
REPORTER WHO LIVED IN 1776!

I'VE BEEN
WEARING MY
SUPERMAN
COSTUME
ALL ALONG

--WHICH MEANS MY
"COLONIAL OUTFIT"
WAS ONLY A **HYPNOTIC**
ILLUSION PROJECTED
BY THE **PSI-MACHINE--**

--AN ILLUSION WHICH
VANISHED WHEN I GAINED
MY MEMORY!

AND AFTER HE STREAMS INTO
INDEPENDENCE HALL AT INVISIBLE
SUPER-SPEED...

MOVE FASTER! TO
THE TUNNEL-- AND
DON'T DROP THAT
ACCURSED DOCUMENT!

KING GEORGE WON'T
PAY UNLESS IT IS
DELIVERED **INTACT!**

BY STEALING IT
BEFORE 'TIS
SIGNED, WE'LL
SHOW THE
REBELS' PLANS!



MOMENTS LATER, THE **UNDER-**
GROUND SPIES DISCOVER
THEY ARE NOT ALONE...

WHO
IS
THAT--?

I DO NOT RECOGNIZE
HIS **COLORS--!**

BUT IT IS
SIMPLE TO
SEE HE IS
NOT ON
OUR
SIDE!

I NEVER SAW THE
REBEL YET WHO COULD
STAND UP TO **BULLETS!**

--UNTIL NOW! OUR BULLETS
ARE BOUNCING OFF HIM!

WE ARE IN THE
PRESENCE OF A **DEMON!**

HE BREATHES FORTH
AIR LIKE A **POWERFUL**
WIND!

WHOOOOOSH!

SCANT MOMENTS AND A HUNDRED YARDS LATER, BEHIND INDEPENDENCE HALL...

HE'S BLOWN US CLEAR OUT OF OUR TUNNEL!

WHO COULD HAVE KNOWN THE REBELS HAVE A SECRET WEAPON?!

WHOOOOOSH!

HOW DO WE EXPLAIN THIS TO KING GEORGE?

YOU THREE HAVE SOME EXPLAINING TO DO, ALL RIGHT...

... BUT NOT TO THE GEORGE YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!

A HEARTBEAT LATER, A BLURRED FIGURE DEPOSITS THREE PRISONERS OF WAR ON A BATTLEFIELD...

ULP!!
GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON!

THE FATHER OF OUR COUNTRY WILL KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH THAT TRIO OF TORY SPIES!

MEANTIME, THIS PIECE OF PAPER HAS A DATE WITH HISTORY--

--AND IT HAD BETTER NOT BE LATE!

AND AT THAT MOMENT, MANY MILES AWAY, FIFTY-SIX DISTINGUISHED MEN ARE FILING INTO INDEPENDENCE HALL FOR AN EVENT THAT WILL LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR THE GREATEST NATION ON EARTH...

AND AS **BEN FRANKLIN...**
THOMAS JEFFERSON...
JOHN HANCOCK...
JOHN ADAMS... AND
 THE REST OF THE
FOUNDING FATHERS
 ENTER THE HALLOWED
 HALL...



...ONCE AGAIN A BLURRED
 FIGURE WHIZZES BY TOO
 FAST TO BE SEEN...



...BUT NOT **TOO** FAST TO RETURN
 THE ABOUT-TO-BE SIGNED
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
 TO ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE WITHOUT
 A SECOND TO SPARE!

THE VOTE IS TAKEN... THE **DECLARATION** IS ADOPTED... AND
JOHN HANCOCK STEPS UP TO ADORN THE FATEFUL DOCUMENT
 WITH HIS FLAMBOYANT SIGNATURE ON THIS **FOURTH OF JULY, 1776...**



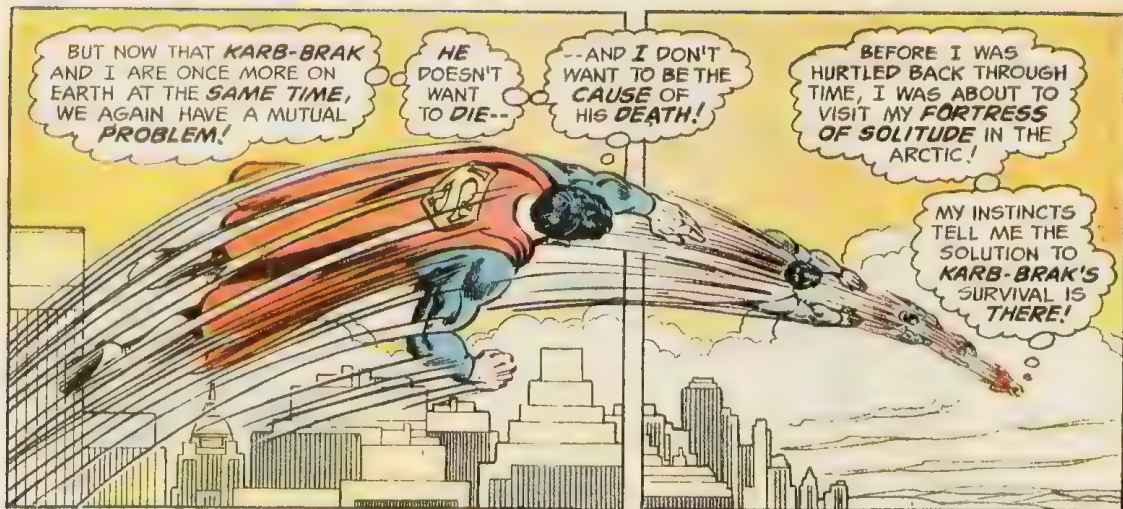
THEN, ACCELERATING BEYOND
 THE **SPEED OF LIGHT**, THE
MAN OF TOMORROW
 BREAKS THROUGH THE
TIME BARRIER--



LOOK--
 UP IN THE
 SKY!

IT'S
SUPERMAN!

ANHHH...
 IT FEELS **GREAT**
 TO BE A **LEGEND**
 IN MY OWN
 TIME AGAIN!



BUT NOW THAT **KARB-BRAK** AND I ARE ONCE MORE ON EARTH AT THE **SAME TIME**, WE AGAIN HAVE A **MUTUAL PROBLEM!**

HE DOESN'T WANT TO **DIE--**

--AND I DON'T WANT TO BE THE **CAUSE** OF HIS **DEATH!**

BEFORE I WAS **HURTL**ED BACK THROUGH TIME, I WAS ABOUT TO VISIT MY **FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE** IN THE **ARCTIC!**

MY INSTINCTS TELL ME THE SOLUTION TO **KARB-BRAK'S** SURVIVAL IS **THERE!**



LATER THAT DAY, IN DOWNTOWN **METROPOLIS**, PASSERS-BY DON'T LIKE WHAT THEY **SEE** OVERHEAD...

WHO IS HE, THAT'S WHAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW?

HE CAN'T BE **HUMAN**, NOT WITH A **FACE** LIKE THAT!

HOW COME HE'S FLYING AROUND? WHERE'S **SUPERMAN**?



I DON'T KNOW!

ME NEITHER!

HEY, HASN'T ANYONE SEEN HIM THE PAST FEW DAYS?

I DID-- THIS MORNING!

WHAT?! IT CANNOT BE!

IT MUST NOT BE!



WHETHER THE FACE IS **ALIEN** OR **HUMAN**--THE LOOK OF **TERROR** IS UNMISTAKABLE...

THE **EARTHMAN** HAS TO BE **MISTAKEN!** **SUPERMAN** IS STRANDED 200 YEARS AWAY!

AND YET... IF **SUPERMAN** IS IN 1776--



--WHY ARE MY **SYMPTOMS** SUDDENLY COMING BACK?

I'M **BURNING UP** WITH FEVER! WHICH MUST MEAN--



--**SUPERMAN!**

YOU ARE BACK!

BACK TO **STAY**, **KARB-BRAK!**



THIS RUNNING
BATTLE BETWEEN
US HAS BEEN
GOING ON LONG
ENOUGH!

IT'S TIME I PUT YOU
OUT OF YOUR MISERY!

ARGHH!
YOU TOUCHED ME--

--THE TOUCH OF
DEATH!



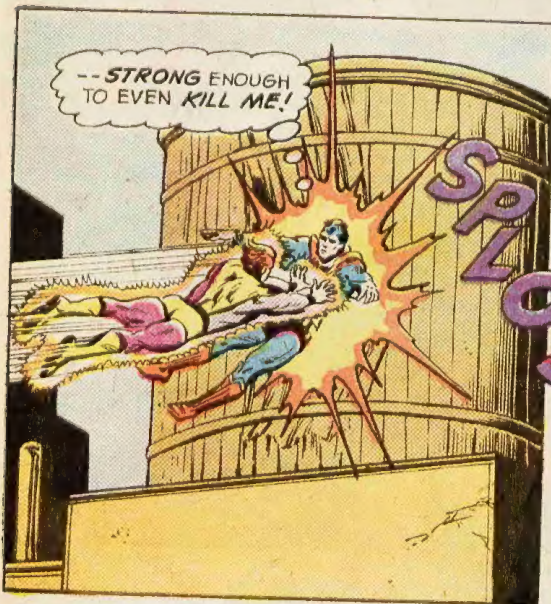
NOTHING
CAN SAVE
ME NOW!

--BUT THAT'S
MORE THAN
ENOUGH TIME
FOR ME TO
KILL YOU!

GREAT KRYPTON!
KARB-BRAK HAS
EXPLODED IN ONE
LAST VIOLENT
RAGE--

I'LL BE
DEAD
WITHIN
ONE
MINUTE--

--AND HIS
ANGER
MAKES HIM
EVEN
STRONGER--
THAN HE
WAS BEFORE--



--STRONG ENOUGH
TO EVEN KILL ME!



HIS FEVER IS AFFECTING
MY INVULNERABILITY--

--WEAKENING IT!

CONTINUED ON 4TH PAGE FOLLOWING.



THERE IS NO ESCAPE, SUPERMAN!

YOU CANNOT ESCAPE YOUR FATE!

IT'S MAKING ME VULNERABLE TO PAIN...

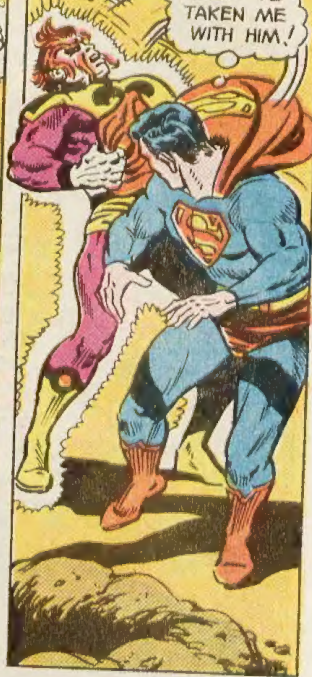


YOU AND I -- ARE DOOMED TO DIE --

TOGETHERRRR... ARRGHH

WHEW! HE'S HAD IT... AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON!

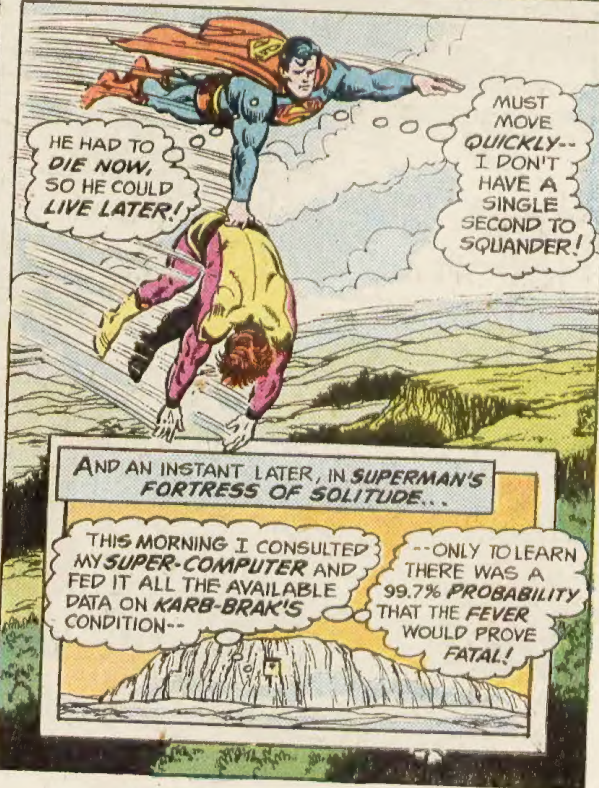
A FEW SECONDS MORE AND HE WOULD'VE TAKEN ME WITH HIM!



MUST MAKE SURE...

YES, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT!

KARB-BRAK IS DEAD!



HE HAD TO DIE NOW, SO HE COULD LIVE LATER!

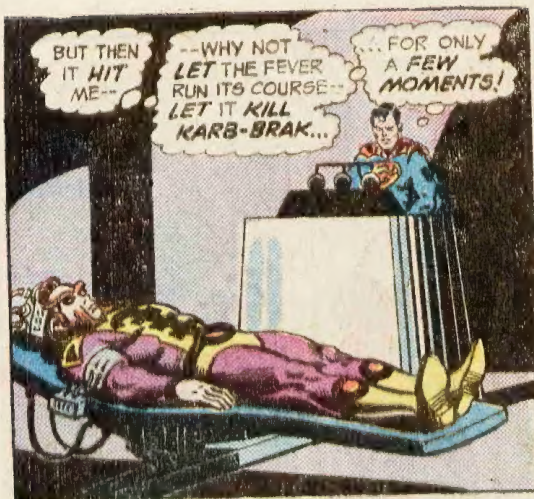
MUST MOVE QUICKLY-- I DON'T HAVE A SINGLE SECOND TO SQUANDER!

AND AN INSTANT LATER, IN SUPERMAN'S FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE...

THIS MORNING I CONSULTED MY SUPER-COMPUTER AND FED IT ALL THE AVAILABLE DATA ON KARB-BRAK'S CONDITION--

-- ONLY TO LEARN THERE WAS A 99.7% PROBABILITY THAT THE FEVER WOULD PROVE FATAL!





BUT THEN
IT HIT
ME--

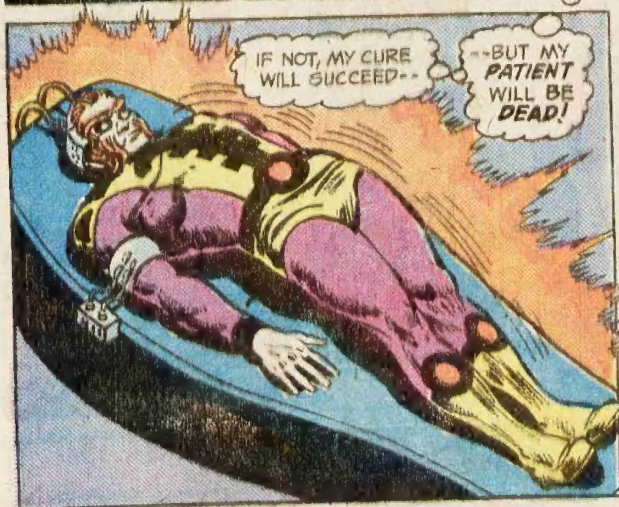
--WHY NOT
LET THE FEVER
RUN ITS COURSE--
LET IT KILL
KARB-BRAK...

...FOR ONLY
A FEW
MOMENTS!



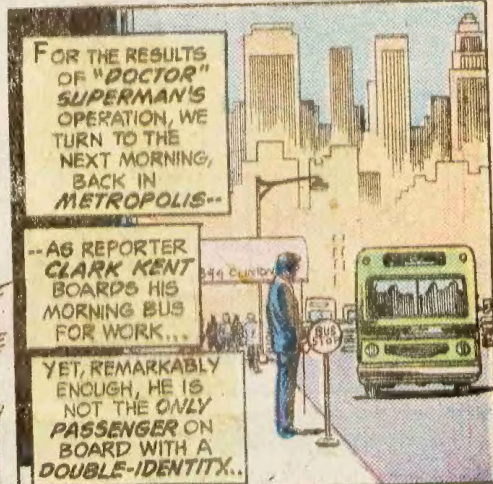
JUST AS EARTH-
PATIENTS CAN BE
CLINICALLY "DEAD"
ON THE OPERATING
TABLE FOR SEVERAL
MINUTES BEFORE
THEY'RE REVIVED--

--I'M HOPING MY
SUPER-SCIENTIFIC
EQUIPMENT CAN
PROVIDE THE SAME
MIRACLE FOR
KARB-BRAK!



IF NOT, MY CURE
WILL SUCCEED--

--BUT MY
PATIENT
WILL BE
DEAD!



FOR THE RESULTS
OF "DOCTOR"
SUPERMAN'S
OPERATION, WE
TURN TO THE
NEXT MORNING,
BACK IN
METROPOLIS--

--AS REPORTER
CLARK KENT
BOARDS HIS
MORNING BUS
FOR WORK...

YET, REMARKABLY
ENOUGH, HE IS
NOT THE ONLY
PASSENGER ON
BOARD WITH A
DOUBLE-IDENTITY...



MY FELLOW-
COMMUTERS
WOULD GET THE
SHOCK OF THEIR
LIVES IF THEY
KNEW THE MAN
SITTING NEXT
TO ME WAS
KARB-BRAK--
AN ALIEN
FROM THE
ANDROMEDA
GALAXY!

HE'S COMPLETELY
CURED NOW! WHEN
THE EFFECTS OF
THE FEVER VANISHED,
HE WAS ABLE TO
ADOPT HIS HUMAN
FORM AGAIN!



I USED HIS PSI-MACHINE
TO ERASE ALL HIS MEMORIES
OF BEING AN ALIEN... AND
HIS BATTLES WITH SUPERMAN!

I PROGRAMMED AN
ENTIRELY NEW PAST
FOR HIM--AS CONSTRUCTION
WORKER ANDREW MEDA
--EARTHMAN!

KARB-BRAK
IS GONE
FOREVER...

...I HOPE!

*AS SHOWN IN ACTION COMICS, #460! --EDITOR.

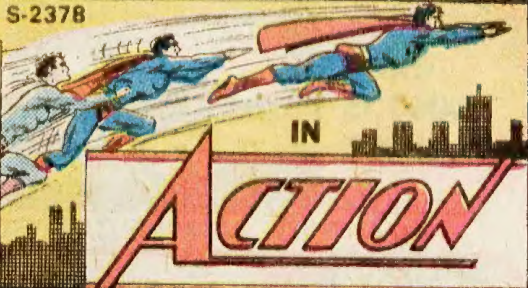
NEXT ISSUE ON SALE DURING THE LAST WEEK IN JULY

THE END



TELEPHONE

S-2378



c/o NATIONAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 75 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019.

Hi again:

"Superman's Big Crack-up" (Action #459) was very enjoyable. Through the subplots you brought out what I was saying in my letter in this ish: the plots themselves have got to be way out, action-packed, far-flung, imaginative, the "realism" effect that allows us to relate to the story is the characters themselves: Kent, Lombard, Barnett and Edge, arguing, laughing, getting on each other's nerves, and reacting in human ways to the aforementioned far-out stories.

Blackrock is really great. The way his dialogue and actions clashed with those of the **Kryptonian Crimebuster** on page 2 ("Supie-baby, we make one dynamite team!") "You want to wear a costume and get on television—talking hip—fine with me! Just stay out of my way!") was delightful.

The going-out-of-his-mind-from-the-images-of-Clark's-news-casts was dramatic, unique and truly terrifying. But it did seem a bit rushed. Perhaps it needed more pages for developing.

Morgan Edge's yelling to Kent about Lola's quitting was dynamite. Nice to know things are still happening in **Superman's** life, without doing something drastic like taking away half his powers.

"Two for the Taxi" was a good **Private Life of Clark Kent** story, but it didn't belong here. Why? Because **Action** is one of the few remaining descendants of the Golden Age variety comics. (They featured a plethora of heroes in one ish!) Therefore, I think **Atom**, **Hawkman** and **Green Arrow** should stick around.

Nor do I think **PLOCK**, which is a very good series, should go into **Superman's** mag either. His full-length adventures are some of the best stuff coming along now. But isn't there a mag called **The Superman Family** for just such features?

Richy Forman, Warminster, Pa.

(Sorry—**SUPERGIRL**, **Lois** and **Jimmy Olsen** have **SF** all sewed up. However, you'll be seeing **THE ATOM** in this month's **DETECTIVE**, followed in coming issues by other heroes, including **BLACK CANARY**, **HAWKMAN** and **GREEN ARROW**.—E.N.B.)

.....

Dear Mr. Bridwell:

Am I mistaken, or is "Blackrock" the nickname of a certain television network—the same one Wayne and Schuster recently referred to as the Nameless Broadcasting Company? Hmm?

Jeanette Bennett, Kennewick, Wn.

(You ARE mistaken. "Blackrock" is the nickname for the building housing a Competing Broadcasting System.—E.N.B.)

.....

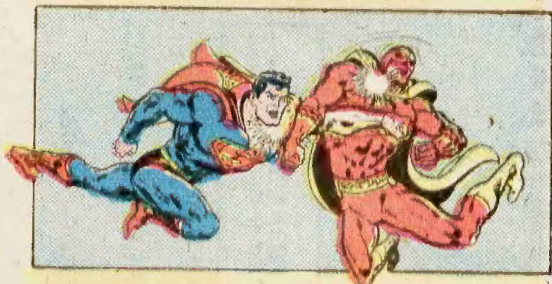
Dear Julie and Associates:

It's a good thing comics don't have their own Nielson Overnight Rating Service. If they had, the second part of the **Blackrock** story probably would never have come out.

I don't think I'm ever going to get used to Elliot Maggin's attempts at social satire. A ridiculous villain with an even more ridiculous costume, muttering unfunny television idioms, has no place in a magazine like **Action Comics**. Humor belongs in **Plop**, not with a character like **Superman**. Is it too much to ask that the world's greatest superhero be taken seriously once in a while?

Kevin L. Callahan, Brea, Calif.

(But if the things **BLACKROCK** said were unfunny, how can you call them humor?—E.N.B.)



Dear Mr. Schwartz:

My initial reaction to **Blackrock** was: Yecchi! He looked and sounded campy, and his TV babblings made me ill! But now ... for some reason I can't fathom, I like the guy!

Sure, he's corny, ridiculous and egotistical, but he was original! **Blackrock** was a unique hero (or should I say "pest"?) and all things considered, I think it's a good idea to keep him on DC's list of active superdudes.

"Two for the Taxi" was very nice. It was an interesting story with plenty of action, but contained a hue of "mild-manneredness" like the story's hero. Mr. Bridwell, take a bow!

Michael D. Dargay, Royal Oak, Mich.

(I did just that. Too bad no one was in the office to see it. It was a very nice bow, really.—E.Nelson Bridwell)